

April 2021 Newsletter



Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Graduate Student Spotlight: Jimmy Lewis

How did you hear about the WGSS MA program?

I didn't really hear about the WGSS MA program here at Cincinnati. I found it purely by accident! I was actually looking for a different program and ended up on the WGSS webpage on the UC website, and it caught my interest, so I applied!

Who are your favorite theorists?

So far, my favorite theorists range from traditional feminist theory to feminist film theory, but if I had to choose 3 right now, I'd say: bell hooks, Angela Davis, and Linda Williams.



What excites you about the field of WGSS?

I think what excites me the most about the field of WGSS is the potential to analyze different fields through the lenses offered in WGSS. As someone primarily interested in the intersection of Christianity and culture, I think WGSS offers a unique cultural lens through which I can evaluate Christianity honestly and constructively.

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WGSS Affiliate Faculty : Dr. Melissa Jacquart



Dr. Melissa Jacquart is an assistant professor in the philosophy department. As a philosopher of science, her research focuses how scientists develop, justify, and understand scientific knowledge. More specifically, she studies epistemological issues connected to the use of models and computer simulations in astrophysics. As the Associate Director of UC's Center for Public Engagement with Science she also works on issues connected to public engagement with science. Her approach to research is significantly influenced by feminist standpoint empiricism. This position advocates for greater diversity within scientific communities, acknowledges that knowledge is necessarily perspectival—with some perspectives (especially those who are underprivileged or underrepresented) offering certain epistemic advantages, and holds that scientists cannot gather evidence and assess/accept theories without making contextual value judgments.

She also works on philosophy of education and is particularly interested in developing effective teaching methodologies for philosophy. She was recently awarded the 2020 Lenssen Prize for best article on teaching philosophy for her paper, "Diversity Is Not Enough: The Importance of Inclusive Pedagogy", co-authored with Rebecca Scott, Kevin Hermsberg, and Stephen Bloch-Schulman.

What Courses are you teaching in the 2021-2022 Academic year?

In the Fall I will be teaching Philosophy 1044, "Meaning of Life" as well as a UC Honors Course, "The Feminist Toolkit for Complex Problems". In the Spring I will be teaching an interdisciplinary graduate course NSCI/HUM/SOSC 7030: Public Engagement with Science. In this course grad students learn theory and best practices related to public engagement with science. They are then placed in interdisciplinary teams and work on public engagement projects with local community partner organizations.

What is your most recent publication?

I recently co-authored a paper (with Ruthanne Crapo Kim and Ann Cahill), "Bearing the Brunt of Structural Inequality: Ontological Labor in the Academy", published in *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*. Our paper examines what we call *ontological labor*, the work required to manage one's identity and body if either or both do not fit into academic structures, norms, and demands. We argue that ontological labor efforts should be understood as a form of labor. We then provide a characterization of ontological labor, detailing the labor as navigating one's obligations to give and managing entitlements to take. We also highlight the ontological labor that takes place through instances of resistance, such as through complaint or refusals. We plan to write a second paper examining three other forms of invisible labor: academic midwifery, diversity labor, and liberatory labor.

What current projects are you working on?

Angela Potochnik (co-PI) and I were recently awarded a National Science Foundation grant to host a workshop here at UC on "Public Engagement with Science and Philosophy of Science" taking place April 30, May 7, and May 14, 2021. This interdisciplinary workshop brings together academics and practitioners to develop theoretical and practical resources for public outreach and engagement about science. More effective approaches to public engagement must address complex issues like trust in science, political polarization, and understanding science's methods and social structure. Day 1 and 2 of the workshop will be of interest to anyone who is interested in public engagement with science. Day 3 will focus on identifying and developing distinctive roles for philosophers of science in the interdisciplinary project of engaging the public with science. Registration is free, conference content will also be available online Afterwards on the UC's Center for Public Engagement with Science YouTube channel.

